

Message Text

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AS, PINT

SUBJ: CONTROL OF THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE

1. SUMMARY: WE ARE REPEATING THE FULL TEXT OF AN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN THE DECEMBER 16 EDITION THE AUSTRALIAN WHICH CORRECTLY POINTS OUT THAT IT WILL BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE ALP TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE FOR AT LEAST SIX YEARS. END SUMMARY

2. QTE. LABOR'S CRASH IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION WAS SO SPECTACULAR THAT IT HAS OBSCURED THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS DEFEAT IN THE SENATE.

3. QTE. ANY ASSESSMENT OF WHEN LABOR WILL RETURN TO POWER MUST BE MEASURED AGAINST THE PROBABILITY THAT THE LIBERAL-NCP COALITION WILL CONTROL THE SENATE FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS, AND POSSIBLY NINE YEARS.

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4. QTE. AUSTRALIA WALKED INTO A HALL OF MIRRORS ON SATURDAY WHICH HAS GROSSLY DISTORTED THE POLITICAL SCENE, POSSIBLY FOR A DECADE.

5. QTE. IT IS NOT SIMPLY THAT A DISASTER BEFELL LABOR IN TERMS OF SEATS LOST BUT RATHER THAT THERE HAS BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN THE EXERCISE OF PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY BETWEEN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE.

6. QTE. THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE, WHETHER DELIBERATELY OR INCIDENTALLY, HAS ASSERTED THE RIGHT OF THE SENATE TO BLOCK SUPPLY AND FORCE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE POLLS WHENEVER IT CHOOSES.

7. QTE. FROM DECEMBER 13, 1975, THE ONLY SANCTION AGAINST THE SENATE'S FORCING A GOVERNMENT TO AN ELECTION IS THE ULTIMATE SANCTION OF REPUDIATION BY THE ELECTORATE.

8. QTE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PARTY WHICH CONTROLS THE SENATE WILL DENY SUPPLY WHEN IT BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY IS SUFFICIENTLY UNPOPULAR TO BE DEFEATED IN THE POLLS.

9. QTE. THIS INTRODUCES A NEW DIMENSION IN FEDERAL POLITICS: NO PARTY WHICH COMMANDS A MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE IS SAFE UNLESS IT ALSO CONTROLS THE SENATE.

10. QTE. ON THIS BASIS THE FRASER GOVERNMENT LOOKS SAFE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT NINE YEARS.

11. QTE. ALTHOUGH THE NUMBERS ARE NOT NEARLY AS SPECTACULAR AS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION, THE LIBERAL-NCP VICTORY IN THE SENATE WAS OF GREATER LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE.

12. QTE. AFTER A DOUBLE DISSOLUTION ELECTION, THE LOWEST-POLLING 30 STATE SENATORS MUST STAND FOR ELECTION AT THE FIRST SENATE POLL WHICH MUST BE HELD BY JUNE 20, 1978.

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13. QTE. THE LABOR PARTY POLLED SO BADLY THAT ON PRESENT COUNTING TRENDS IT WILL TAKE THE LAST POSITION IN MOST, IF NOT ALL STATES.

14. QTE. THE NEXT SENATE ELECTION IS LIKELY TO HAVE ONLY 13 LIBERAL-NCP CANDIDATES TO 16 OR 17 LABOR SENATORS, DEPENDING ON WHETHER SENATOR STEELE HALL SURVIVES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

15. QTE SO LABOR WILL NEED TO WIN BY THREE TO TWO IN EVERY STATE IF IT IS TO WIPE OUT THE LIBERAL-NCP MAJORITY IN THE SENATE.

16. QTE. FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, THE FRASER GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO PERFORM AS BADLY IN THE NEXT 2 1/2 YEARS AS MR. WHITLAM DID IN THE PAST THREE YEARS.

17. IT IS WORTH REMEMBERING THAT SIR ROBERT MENZIES GAINED A FOUR-SEAT MAJORITY IN THE 1951 DOUBLE DISSOLUTION ELECTION AND WAS ABLE EFFECTIVELY TO CONTROL THE SENATE FOR 16 YEARS - UNTIL 1967.

18. QTE. ALLOWING THAT THE LIBERAL-NPC COALITION NEEDED THE DLP SUPPORT FROM 1964, IT DEMONSTRATES HOW A SMALL MAJORITY BECOMES ENTRENCHED IN THE SENATE.

19. QTE. MR. FRASER SEEMS CERTAIN TO HAVE A BIGGER SENATE MARGIN THAN SIR ROBERT MENZIES HAD.

20. QTE. THE LABOR PARTY IS CONSOLING ITSELF THAT IT HAS SUFFERED DISPROPORTIONATELY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES POLL BECAUSE OF AN UNFAIR ELECTORAL DISTRIBUTION, UNALTERED FOR SEVEN YEARS.

21. QTE. LABOR CAN FAIRLY CLAIM THAT 43 PERCENT OF THE VOTE YIELDED ONLY 26 PER CENT OF THE SEATS. ONLY IN ONE STATE - NSW - DID THE LABOR PARTY'S SHARE OF SEATS - 16 - COME CLOSE TO THE PERCENTAGE VOTE.

22. QTE. BUT TO TALK IN PERCENTAGE TERMS IS TO IGNORE THE FACT THAT ON SATURDAY THE LABOR PARTY'S REPRESENTA-

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TION WAS VIRTUALLY WIPED OUT IN THREE STATES - QUEENSLAND, TASMANIA, AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

23. QTE. MR. BEAZLEY, THE OUTSTANDING BRAIN OF THE LABOR PARTY, LOOKS LIKE BEING THE SOLE LABOR REPRESENTATIVE IN WA AND THE FORMER TREASURER, MR. HAYDEN, NEEDED ALL HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT TO SAVE QUEENSLAND FROM BECOMING A TOTAL WIPE-OUT FOR LABOR.

24. QTE. THE LABOR PARTY CANNOT ON ITS PRESENT REPRESENTATION CLAIM TO BE A NATIONAL PARTY. IT IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN INDUSTRIAL-BASED PARTY IN THREE STATES. THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY TODAY IS THE CITY'S ANSWER TO THE RURAL RUMP OF THE COUNTRY PARTY. IT IS THE LIBERAL PARTY WHICH NOW SPEAKS FOR THE GREAT URBAN

SPRAWL OF MIDDLE-CLASS AUSTRALIA.

25. QTE. DECEMBER 13 WAS THE GALLIPOLI FOR THE
YOUNG MEN OF THE LABOR PARTY. THEY RACED BRAVELY TO
THE POLLS ONLY TO BE SLAUGHTERED.

26. QTE. THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY LABOR PARTY AS IT IS
NOW STRUCTURED IS A PARTY WITHOUT A FUTURE BECAUSE IT
HAS LOST ITS YOUTH. GONE ARE ALL BUT THE LAST OF THE
NEW MEN MR. WHITLAM CARRIED INTO PARLIAMENT IN 1969 AND
1972.

27. QTE. IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONLY FOUR LABOR
MPS ARE UNDER 40; MR. MICK YOUNG, 39; MR. RALPH WILLIS, 37;
MR. PAUL KEATING, 31; AND MR. TONY WHITLAM, 32.

28. QTE IN THE SENATE THE UNDER-40S ARE SENATORS SUSAN
RYAN, 33; SENATOR DON GRIMES, 38; AND SENATOR KERRY
SIBRAA, 38.
EMBASSY COMMENT) IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER SIBRAA HAS WON.
END EMBASSY COMMENT).

29. QTE JUST SEVEN OUT OF 60 UNDER THE AGE OF 40.

30. QTE. THE TIRED OLD GUARD OF THE LABOR PARTY IS BACK
IN CONTROL.
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31. QTE. THIS EXPLAINS WHY A 59-YEAR-OLD MAN, MR. FRANK
CREAN, IS BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED FOR ELECTION TO
THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY. END QTE.
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